

# Ribavirin

*rye-ba-VYE-rin*

**Brand Name:** Virazole, Rebetol, Copegus



Ribavirin, also known as Copegus, Rebetol, Virazole, or a component of Rebetron, is a type of antiviral medicine called a nucleoside analogue. This medicine blocks the ability of the hepatitis C virus (HCV) to make more copies of itself. Ribavirin is not active against HIV.

## HIV/AIDS-Related Uses

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Ribavirin is used in combination with interferon alfa-2a or -2b or peginterferon alfa-2a or -2b to treat HIV infected patients who are also infected with HCV.

## Dosage Information

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Ribavirin comes in capsule and tablet forms that are taken by mouth. A solution for inhalation is used in hospitals for children with a life-threatening viral infection of the lungs.

## Contraindications

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Individuals should tell a doctor about any medical problems before taking this medicine. Women who are pregnant and male partners of pregnant women should not take ribavirin.

## Possible Side Effects

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Along with its desired effects, ribavirin may cause some unwanted effects. While not all of these side effects are known, ribavirin may cause anemia (a decrease in red blood cells). This may be dangerous in patients who have heart or breathing problems and may make heart or circulatory problems worse. Tell your doctor if you have chest pain or difficulty breathing. Other side effects of ribavirin use include unusual tiredness or weakness, headache, trouble sleeping, loss of appetite, and nausea.

Other side effects may not be serious and may lessen or disappear with continued use of the medicine. Side effects with the use of inhaled ribavirin include skin irritation due to prolonged drug contact and skin rash. Health care workers who help in the administration of inhaled doses sometime may have headache and itching, redness, or swelling of the eyes.

## Drug and Food Interactions

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A doctor should be notified of any other medications being taken, including prescription, nonprescription (over-the-counter), or herbal medications.

## Clinical Trials

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For information on clinical trials that involve Ribavirin, visit the ClinicalTrials.gov web site at <http://www.clinicaltrials.gov>. In the Search box, enter: Ribavirin AND HIV Infections.

## Manufacturer Information

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Ribavirin  
Valeant Pharmaceuticals International  
Valeant Plaza  
3300 Hyland Avenue  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626  
(800) 548-5100

Virazole  
Valeant Pharmaceuticals International  
Valeant Plaza  
3300 Hyland Avenue  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626  
(800) 548-5100

Rebetol  
Schering - Plough Corp  
2000 Galloping Hill Rd  
Kenilworth, NJ 07033-0530  
(800) 526-4099

Copegus  
Roche Laboratories  
340 Kingsland Street  
Nutley, NJ 07110  
(973) 235-5000

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## **For More Information**

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Contact your doctor or an AIDSinfo Health Information Specialist:

- Via Phone: 1-800-448-0440 Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 5:00 p.m. ET
- Via Live Help: [http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/live\\_help](http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/live_help) Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 4:00 p.m. ET